

**Lincoln Housing Commission  
Virtual Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday, June 30, 2020 9:00 a.m.**

**Members Present on Zoom Teleconference: Keith Gilbert, Chair; Evan Gorman, Vice Chair; Diana Chirita, Allen Vander Meulen**

(Member unavailable: Victoria Benalfew)

**Also present: Tim Higgins, Town Administrator, Pam Gallup, and Elaine Carroll, Adm. Assistant**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. The next meeting will be on July 7, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. and will be in part an Executive Session to discuss rent.

Discussion on Efforts to Revive the Affordable Accessory Apartment Bylaw:

Keith asked what we can do unilaterally as a Town without Legislature to get the AAA bylaw back on track and why did we need to involve the State in the first place. Allen said in 2017 we had the possibility of falling below 10% and we were looking for people interested in renting an accessory apartment as affordable. The Affordable Housing Trust was willing to provide an interest free grant which would not have to be paid back if the apartment was kept affordable for 10 years. This could be used to create an affordable apartment or used to make improvements to an existing one. There was also a property tax break for the square footage of the apartment which would be exempt. This went before Town Meeting in 2017 to approve a zoning change, which was unanimously approved. The grant did not need Town approval since the AHT has discretion over how they use their funds. The property tax exemption also got approved but this is what also needed approval from the Legislature. There were also a lot of hoops to go through in order to comply with DHCD and get that apartment on the SHI. Diana said there were many public forums around this program and they were well attended. Allen said there were only about 6 people who showed interest, but felt this showed that the Housing Commission was interested in creating affordable housing in other ways than through big development.

The most important part of this for some people was the tax break especially because of the increase in taxes for the school. This has stalled in the Legislature for 3 years and since Oriole Landing this has been pushed to the background. Tim Higgins said we went back and forth with the Legislature and they added a Sunset Clause, which meant that this had to go back to Town Meeting every year and ended in three years. They amended it again which seemed to run afoul of DHCD and they would not make the amendments that we wanted. Also the DHCD restrictions made it confusing for potential residents. Pam said that DHCD thought that Lincoln was trying to do an end run around 40B. She thinks we would have had a better chance 20 years ago but should keep it on the books. Tim said he talked to other towns about starting a program but Bedford turned it down by 2 votes and in Concord the pandemic got in the way of their plans. Diana said instead of going through DHCD and the State see if people are willing to charge \$1,000 instead of \$2,000 and get some tax break from the assessors. This would not add to our SHI but may expand diversity of the housing stock. The HC has to decide how to proceed. If we want to go along with the amendments they established because according to Tom Stanley they won't approve it unless we do. Diana felt we should change it to Affirmative Action Affordable Accessory Apartment Bylaw and to rent to minorities first. Her son wrote a nice essay for school but mentioned in it how white this Town is. Allen said in the survey that a lot of people are charging a lot less than if it were affordable and could actually raise the rent. Pam said DHCD does not allow tenants to be mowing lawns or shoveling snow like a property manager in order to lower their rent. If people want to do work to lower their rent then they should not be penalized. Tim will need to reach out to Tom Stanley to move forward and make another run at this. Evan said it is the right thing to do since we put a lot of effort into this and it is a good thing for the Town. If it passes we will need to do more lottery games. Keith will speak to Tim to see if he can set up a Zoom meeting with Tom Stanley and all of the HC members to see if we can move this forward.

At 9:50 a.m. Keith Gilbert made a motion to enter into Executive Session per MGL C. 39, s23B Exemption 1: “to comply with a general or special law to protect individuals’ privacy under C. 214, and/or public records law: and not return to open meeting. Allen Vander Meulen seconded the motion. Roll Call: Keith Gilbert – aye; Allen Vander Meulen – aye; Diana Chirita – aye; Evan Gorman – aye. Others authorized to stay: Pam Gallup and Elaine Carroll

*Submitted by Elaine Carroll*

*Approved as amended: August 5, 2020*